

The Parish Council has taken the decision to hold no further face to face meetings until further notice. There are no urgent decisions to be made at present and so nothing is being neglected.

The only item of business that needs to be carried out is the internal audit. Our Parish Clerk, Gill Ayres, has completed the checklist and has forwarded it to the auditor, along with the relevant documentation. Our thanks go to Gill for carrying out what is usually a paper-based activity in electronic form. It was no trivial matter!



The external audit has been delayed and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), usually due in July, will not now need to be published until September.

Our thanks go to those residents who have responded to our request in the last Bulletin for people's views on the possibility of introducing double yellow lines in certain parts of the village. There is still time to submit opinions on this (see April's Bulletin for details) as the Council will not be taking the matter any further until it can once again hold meetings in the Parish Hall which members of the public can also, as usual, attend.

### Library Services

All libraries are closed and the mobile library service has been discontinued for the duration of the current crisis. However, the Council has:

- Extended all loans until the end of May
- Halted any new fines
- Removed the limit on all renewals



Many thanks to Pixie for all the lovely rainbows around the village.

They really cheer us up.  
Jan and Dave Hiett

### Dog Walking

If you are located in the Great Budworth area and looking for a local caring dog walker, I am available for daily walks, toilet/feeding and general care and attention visits. For your dog's individual requirements/needs, please give me a call.



Emma: tel 01606 891 229;



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# BUDWORTH BULLETIN

May 2020



# VE DAY

## 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

A SHARED MOMENT OF CELEBRATION

## 8TH MAY 2020

Well, we may not be able to celebrate the 75th anniversary of VE Day as planned, but we are still able to mark the occasion in this issue of the Bulletin by including the wartime memories of a number of residents - to whom we extend our warmest thanks for sharing them. And what a wonderfully varied range of memories they are! We hope you enjoy reading them.



"Well, would you believe it!" I sound like Victor Meldrew, but proceedings in our village, in Cheshire, in the United Kingdom and this planet, have changed totally in the past two months. Yet my son still milks the cows, doctors and nurses continue the wonderful work of our NHS, shop workers and teachers continue to keep the wheels of the country going and we all look forward to life getting back to normal. Social Media can be a great means of keeping in touch and I have to admire everyone's efforts to entertain and keep

our peckers up!! Look out for the online efforts on FaceBook because as we have no meetings planned in the next few weeks we thought it would be a good time to look at what the WI did for the village during the war in 1945, to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ending of World War 11.

The Great Budworth WI was formed in 1932 so we were a very young group when war was declared in 1939. Meetings still went ahead at Providence House on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 2.30pm. Members brought along a lump of coal to meetings to put on the boiler to heat the room and boil the water for the cup of tea.

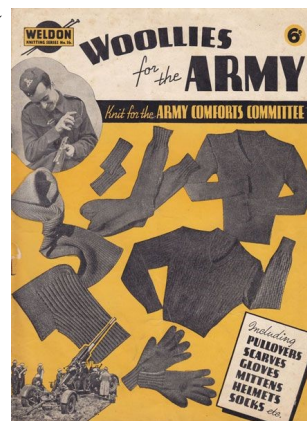
The various meetings encouraged members to knit comforters for soldiers. I think these included scarves, balaclavas, gloves, etc., so industrious knitters got going. We have a letter of thanks that the WI received for the beautiful comforts we sent. Eggs were donated for the Northwich Infirmary, which is still our local hospital. I presume most people kept a few hens and surplus eggs were always welcome.

Another important activity was collecting foxgloves, as digitalis was essential as a heart stimulant. Members picked the foxgloves - and also Rosehips for Vitamin C - and these were taken to a collection point in Knutsford. The WI were responsible for distributing orange juice and rose hip syrup to children. This could be collected from the Old Hall at designated times.



brings the horrors of war home to everyone.

June Wilkinson



Whist drives were a popular way to raise funds for the war effort, including Mrs Churchill's Russia Fund, the Prisoners of War fund, the Red Cross and Lady Cripps' Aid to China Fund.

Wastepaper was collected for re-cycling and cured rabbit skins were used for inside soldiers' helmets to make them more comfortable.

Besides the fulfilment of doing our bit, there were times when sons, husbands and local men who had gone to war did not return home. There are tributes in our minutes to them. This

## GARDEN CLUB

The Garden Club is taking time out during this Covid 19 pandemic, so no meetings are taking place at present. Those of us who have a garden are filling our days enjoying what we do best: planting, sowing, reaping, and mowing.

In fact, all of us have appreciated that getting back to nature is the most marvellous thing in our present lives. There is hardly any traffic on our roads, the pollution level is low in our cities, and we can hear the birds sing.

If you are up for the dawn chorus, do spend a while listening in your garden or at your window. You will be amazed to hear some fantastic sounds, and then try to identify the birds. Even the rustle of the leaves on the trees is beautiful, and if it is a warm morning, the bees will be out as well, making easy listening. Take advantage of this unusual lockdown time, no doubt the magic of the morning will be gone when we are all back at work.



We have been planting potatoes (see left!) and sowing tomato seeds, vegetables and flowers. We have divided our perennials, and potted lots up to sell to members when we finally return to business.

We have a very tidy garden: paths are clean and tall plants are staked in the beds. We want this dreadful time to be over soon, and for everyone to keep safe. If you are well, then take advantage and spend as much

time as possible in your garden.

Every gardener is, to some degree, a philosopher, and that is gardening's great power. It teaches us how to live, and how to keep the dream of beauty alive, even through the darkest days we are facing. As the film star Audrey Hepburn once said, to plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.

We don't know when we will return to what we think of as normal life but you can still buy your gardening sundries from local nurseries such as Curbishleys - and they will deliver. Give them a ring - their number is on your membership card - because they also need support.

We keep in touch with family and friends via the wonders of the internet and villagers have been wonderful, with so many offering to shop for us oldies! Thank you everyone, this is a story for the history books. We will meet again - one day.

Jean & Peter Davies.



*Smithy Lane in Spring.  
Photo courtesy of David Burgess*

## *curbishleys roses*

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## A MEMORY OF DUNKIRK

*In her wartime memories on p7, June Wilkinson refers to the book 'Memories of Great Budworth'. The following is a slightly edited extract from that book: it's part of Anne (Nancy) Scott's memoir (Nancy was a relative by marriage of our own Sue Scott, of Church Street). At the onset of war, Nancy trained as a nurse and was working in Marbury Hall (which had been requisitioned for war use and converted into a hospital), when news of the Dunkirk evacuation came through.*

News came through that the evacuation of our armed forces, which had been on the retreat for some weeks on the Continent, had started to take place and it was then all we could think about as everyone had someone involved about whom they were concerned. We knew that one of my brothers had been in France since the beginning and the other was in Athens by that time.

The next morning when I went on duty I could see that during the night some of the patients had been moved in order to make space for emergency cases. I soon discovered that we had two men, weather-beaten and unshaven, sleeping soundly and I knew at once that they must be casualties of the Dunkirk evacuation. Our usual patients were keeping quiet and whispering amongst themselves, not wishing to disturb them. The sister on the ward explained that they were two Norwegian seamen who had joined in the rescue and evacuation of their allies—not injured but needing a few days' care and rest after their ordeal.

Later in the day they 'came round' and, although they could hardly speak a word of English, they expressed their gratitude and thanks by their expressions and smiles of joy when they found themselves safe and warm — no words were needed!



*Marbury Hall prior to its destruction in 1962*

## KEIRAN PETERS

It is with a heavy heart that I report that my beloved best friend and husband, Keiran, has passed. His health over recent years had not been great, yet he had continued to live life to his best ability and be involved in many aspects of business, family and village life.

Keiran finally passed on Monday 30th March at Leighton Hospital in Crewe, having been taken there late morning by ambulance. He died of bronchopneumonia and was surrounded by myself, our son, Ashley, and daughter-in-law, Kate, all holding his hand during his final hours.

Although we have only lived in Great Budworth for a relatively short time, moving in the weekend before Christmas in 2015, both Keiran and I have truly found our 'home'. Our first memory of Great Budworth was the initial evening of our move on 21st. December 2015 when, as we were frantically unpacking our belongings, Ashley heard singing, opened the front door - and saw a vast number of people carrying lanterns, singing Christmas Carols to music. It was magical. The warmth and happiness we enjoyed that evening has continued and increased as time has gone by. We have been so welcomed by every one of you and joined and been invited to many social events and clubs, including (but by no means limited to!) the dining club, bowling club, cricket club, golf society and the WI, as well as the wonderful reception and friendships surrounding the George and Dragon.

Keiran was buried at St. Mary and All Saints Church in Great Budworth on 8th April. Government rules on social distancing hindered our ability to have a church service or even invite more than a total of ten people at the burial including immediate family, although many other villagers, out on their daily walks, witnessed the funeral procession. I cannot begin to tell you how honoured and humble I have been to receive so many calls, texts, emails and cards. These are continuing and I am so grateful for such friendship, love, warmth and support.

In a few months' time, when normality is restored, I will arrange a memorial service and party for Keiran and hope that each and every one of our friends can join us. I will be in touch when I can, but in the meantime thank you all for such warmth and friendship.

*Very best wishes, Nid Peters.*



## SCHOOL 100+ WINNERS

**MARCH winners were chosen by a number generator, watched on video by the committee.**

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Pam Pees**

**2nd Prize (£10) No. 59  
Lee Isherwood**

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## HIELD GROVE PLAY AREA

Following my appeal in the Budworth Bulletin last October for donations towards the cost of new children's play equipment in Hield Grove, I must first of all thank very sincerely all those who donated. My purpose in writing here is to provide an update on the attempts by Cllr. Kate Parkinson and myself to obtain local authority funding.

Most play areas throughout Cheshire East have been closed because of the current pandemic. Our Grant application failed, owing to the overwhelming number of applications submitted for competing projects. I have been reassured, though, that Cheshire East Council are still looking at various avenues to go down to acquire seating and some apparatus for the children's play area.



I just want to assure Bulletin readers (and the local community generally) that efforts to revive the play area in Hield Close continue – and to reassure those generous people who have donated that I am retaining their donations safely until the Council tell me what they have managed to do and where the money is needed.

Thank you all again for your interest and your donations.

Ben Benson, Hield Grove



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## PICTURE PERFECT

During the war my mother, at the age of 22, moved from the outskirts of London to Oxfordshire to live with her older sister, sister-in-law and their five small children and she joined the Land Army.



*The preferred portrait*

Nearly five years ago I was contacted by a cousin to say he had seen what he thought was a portrait of my mother, in Land Army uniform, in a sale at Bonhams in Oxford. I contacted them and discovered it had been sold to a dealer and was to be exhibited at The Art of the War Years Exhibition in London.

I was sent a photograph of the painting and indeed it did look like my mother but I had already inherited a portrait of her (in her Land Army uniform) painted by my grandmother's artist friend, Mary Eastman, so I was very surprised to hear about another portrait. However, my daughter had a 1942 wartime diary of my mother's in which my mother mentions sitting for a portrait which neither she nor the artist liked, so it was 'abandoned' and she sat for a second one.



My mother writes, 'Mary Eastman in a better mood for painting and it is like me - am thrilled'. She also mentions that she had a very swollen leg that day as she had been stung by one of three bees up her Land Army dungarees! We came to the conclusion that the 'abandoned' portrait had to be this one in the upcoming exhibition/sale. I got in touch with the organisers, stupidly told them about the bee sting which added provenance and then bought the picture (left) at a vastly inflated price!

Penny Kordel

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## A GREAT DANE



My father, Rino Malte Iversen, emigrated in 1936 from Denmark to Kenya, where he became a farmer. On the outbreak of war, he joined the British forces, serving in the Kenya Regiment, and was stationed for some of the time in Mombasa. He was awarded the 1939-45 Star Medal (pictured left, on the right) for overseas service for British Forces in the Second World War between 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1939 and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1945. He also earned the Africa Star (pictured left, on the left), a military campaign medal instituted by the United Kingdom for award to British and Commonwealth forces between 10<sup>th</sup> June 1940 and 12<sup>th</sup> May 1943.

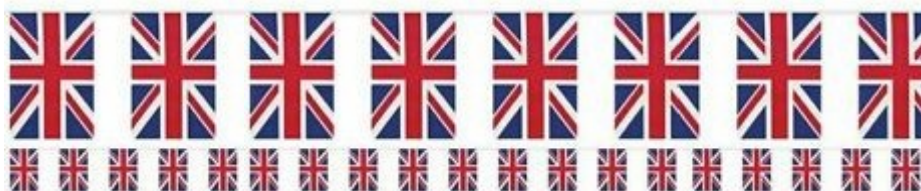
What is more interesting, and probably not so well known, is my father's Danish medal: King Christian the X's Medal of Liberty (right). Denmark was, of course, occupied by the Germans during the war. In 1946 this medal, which is a mark of Danish Excellence, was founded by King Christian X and awarded to Danes and those of other nationalities who served Denmark in some way overseas during World War II in the period 1940-1945.



My mother, Julia Iversen, (106 years old and still with us), joined the Wrens in Portsmouth as a Petty Officer and opted for service abroad. Mum does not know from which port they set sail as it was under cover and at night. They sailed down the west coast of Africa and because of enemy action spent a few weeks in Durban before proceeding to Mombasa. She and my father (pictured right, on their wedding day) met there on one of the many socials that took place between the forces. She has the Defence Medal (above, left) and the War Medal 1939-45 (above, right).



Ros Barclay



*We may not be able to have that BIG village party, but we could put red, white and blue bunting outside our houses to celebrate VE Day ....*

## CHURCH NEWS

### VE Day 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1945.

Trawling through the Parish archives in the Chester Record Office in February, I came across a few references to VE Day which I thought may be of interest.

In September, 1944 the PCC discussed a letter from the Bishop of Chester concerning the future return of men and women from the Forces, and the setting up of a fund to help with this return to civilian life. In April, 1945 the PCC discussed arrangements for Services in the Parish Church when VE Day was declared – Holy Communion Services at 8 and 9am and Sung Evensong at 7.30pm. There was no mention of a party!

A year later discussions were held about the War Memorial in the Lych Gate, and it was agreed that the names of those from the Parish who had died during the war should be added to the existing memorial.

Some 15 years later, interestingly, the PCC discussed a letter concerning the removal of the German war dead from the Churchyard in Great Budworth to a special German Cemetery at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire, which was approved.

### High Sheriff of Cheshire

Congratulations to Nick Hopkinson, who became the new High Sheriff of Cheshire on 7<sup>th</sup> April. The Declarations were to have been made in Church in a special service that evening, but in the end they were made in a Zoom Conference in the afternoon, with a small number of participants (including the new High Sheriff's Chaplain – the Vicar of Great Budworth!) and with many people invited to observe.

It was a moving service and we look forward to Nick's year of service within Cheshire – more about this to come.

### Church closure

In line with guidelines from the Archbishops, the Church is still closed to visitors and no services are being held in the building. The only services currently allowed are Commitments at Crematoria and graveside burials.

Please do visit the Church website for information, prayer and worship resources and please contact the Vicar or Churchwardens if you would like to have the Weekly Sheet e-mailed to you, or if you would like to discuss anything. Please be assured that you are very much in our prayers at this very challenging time.

### Dog fouling in the Churchyard

A number of comments have been made recently about dog fouling in the churchyard – please can dogs be kept on leads if being walked through the churchyard and please can owners clear up after their pets – bins for bags are at both ends of the Avenue so there is no excuse for not doing this and putting the bags straight into a bin. Thank you.



## SCENES FROM THE MANCHESTER BLITZ

In 1940 my father was not in the right age group for military call up and so instead he volunteered to be an auxiliary fireman with the Salford Fire Service. By day he was the manager of an electrical shop (F. Lomax and Son), selling the latest radio sets, powered by accumulator batteries (which rely on sulphuric acid). They were charged in the cellar at the shop for a 'tanner' a week (a 'tanner' being 6 old pence or 2.5 pence today).

My first Saturday job, at eight years of age, was running down to the cellar for them. They were very heavy and I struggled to carry them.

My father worked a nine-hour, six-day week, earning £5 per week, shutting the shop at 6pm and then coming home for an evening meal before going off to the fire station for training. At the beginning of the war, each family was given the means to build themselves an Anderson air raid shelter. This was a corrugated aluminium frame, bolted together into a type of igloo. Not satisfied just to erect it in the garden, my father decided to bury it. He dug a 3ft deep, 6x8ft hole, and built the shelter into that, then covered the top of the shelter with



*Bomb damage in Manchester city centre*

the soil dug out of the hole. He concreted the floor and built three bunks: one each for my mother, my brother and myself. We were all put in the shelter at night in our night clothes, whilst he went to the fire station. It was a good job he acted so quickly at the start of the war, for in December 1940 Manchester was bombed on many nights in what was known as the Manchester blitz, and, though I was just six years old, I remember it very well.



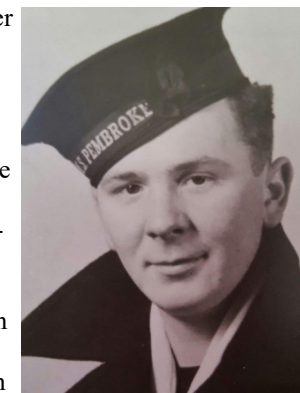
*Bomb damage in Salford*

On the worst night, he fought to put out the fires on the roof of the Salford Palace Theatre - his shop was actually in the foyer of that theatre! He came home early the following morning, bedraggled and exhausted - and had lost one of his trouser legs! He took me out of the shelter and lifted me onto his shoulders so that I could see the fires in Trafford Park, Salford Docks and other parts of Manchester. We had a clear view as we lived on a hill.

Even though I was only 6, I can still remember him saying to me "Son, don't let wars like this ever happen again". I have been living in hope ever since.

Peter Davies (who turned 85 on 18 April)

that almost knocked you unconscious. I thought my number was up this time. I was all dressed up in winter clothing, with my lovely well-fitting leather sea boots on, too. I couldn't kick off my boots! So, together with all the other added weight, I went down ... and down ... and down. I thought it was getting somewhat dark down there, so I made a big effort and forced myself back to the surface - and to daylight. I caught a heaving-line thrown to me, but my frozen hands couldn't hold it and it was pulled out of my non-existent grasp. The well-fitting leather sea boots took charge again and attempted to take me on another excursion to Davy Jones's Locker. Next time I surfaced I shouted to the matelot who was heaving the line to let it go slack when I caught it, so that I could wrap it round my waist. He did - and I survived. My boat's crew survived, too, but I think some of the men that we'd picked up didn't. Two helpings of that sort of thing never did anybody any good at all.



Late in the evening, my crew and I were taken aboard a Russian MGB that took us back to Honeysuckle. Honeysuckle herself didn't look too good either. Two holes in her bows, scorched, blackened and blistered paintwork. She looked a bit burned up.

We arrived back in the Clyde on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 - VE Day. The war in Europe was ended!"

## A DRAMATIC ESCAPE

My Jewish grandfather, Robert Hecht, was born in Budapest, where his parents owned a restaurant chain. Robert was staying with his aunty in Hungary when war broke out, as his parents were travelling on business. However, in the turmoil of war, they lost contact with his parents so that his aunty had to continue to look after him.

Then one day, on the way home from school, he was told that his aunty had been killed. He was told that he should now keep a low profile and hide as much as possible.

And so Robert spent four years as a child on the run, begging for food and looking for places to hide. Eventually, the Russians entered Hungary and they were good to him, helping him to get him to Paris, where relatives had been living and trying to trace him. There followed a few years spent living there, where he regained some weight. He was 13 when the war ended.

Meanwhile, his parents had managed to get to London. Robert was eventually reunited with his family after the Red Cross contacted him to say that his parents and his younger brother and sister were there. He settled in London, started a business and had family here in the UK. Sadly, he passed away a year before I was born, but he had a good life in London, despite missing out on so many crucial years of education.



*Robert Hecht, with his son,  
Willow's father*

Willow Warder



## TROUBLE AT SEA

*The following is an extract from a letter from my uncle, Leading Seaman Eric Robinson (pictured opposite), to his former shipmate, Leading Seaman Ted Hubbard. At some point, both had served on HMS Honeysuckle (pictured), one of the flower-class corvettes that escorted the Arctic convoys and the two men corresponded for years after the war. In this extract he talks about the occasion when his was one of the ships used as bait to tempt out the Scharnhorst – and a later brush with death. Anna Lee*

“We were a lightly escorted convoy of 19 ships, but within striking distance there were plenty of the heavy boys, like one battle wagon and quite a few cruisers and fleet destroyers. Scharnhorst was tempted and out she came. On learning that she was on her way and was intent on the destruction of the convoy we, the convoy, altered course to the north, leaving enough room for the big lads to fight it out. Scharnhorst was sunk on the evening of Boxing Day, 1943, 60 miles north west of North Cape.

Honeysuckle’s greatest enemy was always the weather, but I didn’t really mind. In fact, I quite enjoyed it, being an all-weather sailor.

The last wartime convoy to Murmansk proved to be the worst from my point of view, as it almost cost me my life.

The last ship to be sunk in the European war was the frigate HMS Goodall. It was on our return trip that she was ‘fished’, on 29<sup>th</sup> April ’45. She was hit in her forward magazine and all her fo’c’sle was blown away, right back to her bridge. Her deck was curled back like a sardine can lid. Honeysuckle was quite close-to and went over to give assistance. Goodall was a raging inferno inside; all her ship sides were cherry-red with the heat, turning the sea-water into steam. We couldn’t go alongside under those conditions, so our Skipper rammed our bows into her square stern, from which we received two holes in our bows. Sub. Lt. Bell, the New Zealander, and some of our crew jumped aboard Goodall and rescued some of the engineers.

At this point, I went off with my lads in the port sea boat to pick up men who were in the water. I picked up quite a number, maybe more than I should have done, I think, considering the size of the boat – we were pretty well down in the water. In the meantime, the diesel fuel was pouring out of Goodall and was spreading all over the sea.

Somewhere it contacted a calcium flare and BOOM! – the scene was ablaze. Our boat was surrounded by flames. There was no opening anywhere and I was wondering how we were going to get out of this right old mess. There was just no place to go. I shudder to think what might have happened had the frigate HMS Farnham Castle not turned up to our rescue. Looking like a fire tender she came through the flames with all her fire hoses blasting the burning fuel out of her path. She was so close when she came through the flames that she almost ran us down – she had a fair amount of way on her – and when a line was thrown and caught, my boat was towed under and sank. Everyone was now in the water! The temperature of the sea was, as you may well imagine, low enough to totally incapacitate the proverbial metallic primate and the shock of being immersed in



## 75 YEARS AGO IN GREAT BUDWORTH

Roger and Joan Wilkinson and their sons, Peter and Bob, moved from Antrobus to White Hart Farm, Great Budworth in February 1945, just before the end of the War. The cows were milked in the adjoining shippin, now White Hart Barn, and walked along Church Street each day to the open fields along Westage Lane, which at that time began just after the Methodist Chapel.

Food was still rationed, but villagers could buy milk, potatoes and eggs from the White Hart farmhouse door. They would bring a jug, which was filled for them with fresh natural milk from the dairy; new potatoes would be picked fresh from the field and newly laid eggs would be collected from the hens.

During the war years young men would have left to do their National Service, but, apart from the bombing raids and food shortages, life would tick along as before. The Church and school carried on as usual, although an air raid shelter was constructed on the school field. There was a boys’ club and the WI met each month at Providence House and everyone did their bit to raise funds for worthy causes.

The Arley Estate moved the Wilkinson family from the centre of the village to New Westage Farm, on Heath Lane, a few years later, when the village became more residential, and that is where they are today.

75 years later the village is in lockdown again because of the Coronavirus, making a big difference to our life in the village. We seem to have come full circle, because in this crisis milk is once again available from the Wilkinsons’ farm, though not straight from our cows but delivered from Sheldon’s dairy. And you can also get bread, eggs – and even ice cream! It is giving us a small taste of what life was like for villagers during war time - and they had five years of austerity.

I have never heard of any parties to celebrate the end of the war. I think that everyone was so relieved it was over, but the country was also very downtrodden and it took many years to get back on track.

If anyone wants to know more about village history, the Millennium Book ‘Memories of Great Budworth’, published in the year 2000, edited by Alan Bailey and Sue Ritchie and contributed to by many members of the community, contains lots of local information. Copies are still available from the Ice Cream Farm or from Alan Bailey at £5.00 each.

June Wilkinson

## A YOUNGSTER’S VE DAY (1)

I was nearly two years old when the war started. We lived in Knutsford and my father was in the Home Guard. When the sirens sounded he was off out of the house straight away. If there was any enemy danger we would shelter under the stairs of our house. Food was rationed, but we were lucky as my father grew vegetables and kept hens. We even needed ration vouchers to buy sweets! I can remember we once walked to Seven Sisters Lane, between Lower Peover and Ollerton, to see a field where a bomb had exploded during the night. It left a huge crater! Tanks were kept hidden under the trees in Tatton Park and there was a prisoner of war camp at Toft Hall Knutsford.

Jane Fairclough

## BEN BENSON'S MEMORIES

One of my uncles, my mother's brother-in-law, was in the R.A.F for much of his working life, rising to become a Squadron Leader. He served throughout the second world war, being stationed anywhere and everywhere the RAF needed him. He led a squadron of Vulcan bombers and later a squadron of Victor bombers in Malaysia, where he became ill with malaria and had to return home. Once recovered, he retired from the RAF and then, because of his technical knowledge, became a technical author at Woodford in Cheshire, writing aircraft user manuals for use by engineers. He was a much-respected man.

My other uncle was in the Army and served throughout the second world war. He was captured and tortured by the Japanese but managed to escape and made it back home. Once recovered, he returned for duty, only to end up in a German prisoner-of-war camp. Pictured here are some of the letters he would write home from a German PoW Camp.



My Mother's first husband was stationed at Grantham and was an aircraft machine gunner and was decorated for his service. Sadly, he died in 1948 as a result of injuries sustained during the conflict. My Mother eventually remarried: to my Father, who had taken part in both world wars. I know that in the second world war he was decorated for transporting ammunition to wherever it was needed during the blackout. My only remaining brother and I, born in the early '50s, are the only ones left of our generation, as may be seen on our family grave in Macclesfield, which is engraved with the names of those I have mentioned, and which I take care of.

My other memory takes me to a dear friend I had - maybe some in the community would have known him: his name was Cyril Cadman. It wasn't until I attended his funeral in Great Budworth that I learnt (during a reading that was given) that he was part of the Home Guard in Great Budworth village. Apparently, he was very afraid when on duty at the top of the church belfry, as he had only five bullets in his rifle! I think on this a lot when I attend his grave and picture him guarding the village at the top of the church.

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material. Barbara, however, was more than competent and was offered a better paid job more suited to her level of skill. She declined, though, as it would have meant leaving her friends.

Barbara has many memories of her time there including the occasion when, during a night shift, whilst she and her friends were enjoying a break in the canteen, all the lights suddenly went out and they heard the impact of a bomb exploding directly above them. After a momentary pause, the pianist calmly continued playing in the dark and after a while the lights came back on. Barbara remembers the scene of devastation that awaited them the next morning as they emerged onto ground level at daylight.

Then there was the 'sweetie thief'. All the girls on the factory floor had lockers (mis-named since they were not lockable) in which, amongst other things, they kept their stock of sweets. At some point it became obvious that someone was routinely stealing sweets from them all and so Barbara and a few others replaced their regular sweets with laxative sweets! Sure enough, the offender was missing from work for three days.

A less pleasant memory is of the rats "as big as cats!" that populated the factory: the night shift workers regularly saw them running along the pipes overhead.

Then there was the man who worked in the factory as he was declared unfit for military service. Once in awhile he'd be required to present himself for a medical examination, at which point he would suddenly develop a pronounced limp for a day or two.

Periodically two men with steel rods would wander around the cave factory, prodding the ceiling to test for any loose rock. If any were found, the area would be cordoned off until it could be stabilised.

After the war, Barbara married Leslie Jennings, who had served in the Fleet Air Arm on an aircraft carrier (HMS Shah) in the Indian Ocean during the war and in 1948 they had their first son, Steven, who was born just three days after the birth of the NHS, which enabled his parents to spend the money saved for the confinement on a magnificent Silver Cross pram instead. Which was just as well as it went on to be used for Steven's four siblings who arrived over the course of the next 13 years!

Barbara is still very much with us today and known to many in Great Budworth: a much-loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She's often seen in the village, staying with son Steven and his partner, Anna, although at the moment she's in lockdown near Blackpool with one of her other sons and his wife, who are taking very great care of her! The photo (right) was taken on one of her frequent walks on the beach.



### A YOUNGSTER'S VE DAY (3)

I remember, aged just 7, a lorry driver braking in our avenue and shouting across to me "Hey the war's over!" But what I remember most about VE Day is my Mum queueing 'round the block' to buy some ice cream at Pablo's and rushing home on the tram with it. Heaven knows where they found the materials to make it, but I bet no-one asked.

Rod Bowman



## MEMORIES OF A CAPSTAN OPERATOR



When Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, Barbara Gane was 16 years old and employed by Mardon Son & Hall, a subsidiary of the WD & HO Wills cigarette factory in Bristol, where she lived with her parents (pictured, left, in her parents' garden). Two years later she was called up and, whilst she would have preferred to join the WAAF, her parents disapproved and so she went to work in a munitions factory. Before that, however, she was sent to Gloucester where she and other girls stayed in digs whilst they were trained for six weeks on a milling machine.

Once trained on the milling machine, Barbara went to work in the underground aircraft factory at Corsham, a market town in Wiltshire. This factory was a series of caves 120 feet underground. The day began at 5 am when Barbara got up, got herself ready and

then walked a mile uphill to catch the works coach at 6 am. She would meet up with her friends Hazel, Doreen and Winifred, who all caught the same coach, for the hour long journey to Corsham. Once there, they would travel in a lift that would take them down to the factory, which she says was vast and hewn out of rock (see pic. right). The factory operated 24 hours a day and shifts were 12 hours, 7am to 7pm and 7pm to 7am, and the working week was six days long.

It was typical of how things work in emergencies that, having trained for six weeks on a milling machine, she was set to work on something quite different: a capstan, producing screws which would be used in the production of aircraft. The capstan had six arms, each carrying a different tool, and the capstan operator would use each tool



in turn to create a screw. A capstan operator is pictured at work here (left), though Barbara is keen to point out that, in common with her friends, she did NOT wear the headscarf and overalls!

Barbara loved the work: she loved the machinery and relished the precision needed for the task of applying each of the six tools to the chunk of metal which was the raw material. The less skilled would strip the thread - and therefore waste the time, effort and raw

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## RURAL LIFE IN WARTIME ENGLAND

I was born on a farm in 1941. We had no electricity or gas then (it was the 1950s before we were modernised); there was no flush toilet either, only an earth closet down in the orchard, where there was a lilac tree growing over the little brick building. My sister was born in 1945, so we were definitely war babies. Here I am aged one (2).

My father had cart horses and this (1) is him coming back to the farm with a load of loose hay, which then had to be stacked in the hay shed. Everything was done by hand; there was very little mechanization on his farm.

We lived at Pool Bank Farm, Bowdon (3) down the fields from the houses, but Ringway airport was close by and very near to my Grandad Jackson's. His address was Roaring Gate Farm, Ringway. My father was born there and saw all the new airport being built, some of it on their family land.

Being only a child, but an inquisitive one, I remember a bomb dropping across the fields from us and Dad took me to see the bombed house. There were furnishings from their house strewn over the trees, and the rest looked like a pile of bricks. Dad collected shrapnel, bits from old bombs, which were in his own fields, and he told me how close that bomb had been. The Germans were looking for the airport and for Trafford Park as likely places to destroy.

My local village was Bowdon, which was just a few tiny cottages then, and I went to school there from the age of four. The VE day celebration was in the village and there were some sports on a field belonging to the 'big house.' I remember Wall's ice cream, which was wonderful to me, and taking part in a running race, and being given a sweet lollipop.

My parents took us on holiday to Blackpool shortly after, and here (4) is Dad with my sister, Carol, and me near the sea. Note that he is dressed in suit and tie, as people would in those days. After the war ended, the farmers had done well, because they produced food, and I was a lucky one who had tasted a banana during the war.

The cows were hand milked and the milk was collected in churns by a Jewish family from Altrincham. They seemed to have everything and gave us bananas and sweets when they collected the milk each day. My father had been awarded a certificate from the Ministry of Agriculture for his milk production during the war. It had pride of place on the sitting room wall. It says that he had produced over two gallons of milk per cow per day, a great achievement at that time. Today, a cow would be expected to produce at least eight gallons a day! How things change!

My childhood memories are good. Life in the country was simple and wonderful.

Jean Davies nee Jackson



## A POLISH SOLDIER'S WAR

**M**y father, Franciszek Kordel (pictured, right), was born in 1902 in a rural part of Poland under Russian Tzar occupation. After the collapse of Tzarist Russia, and Poland becoming an independent entity, he joined the army as a teenager and for his troubles, while fighting the Bolshevik Army, got a bullet through his foot. Despite this, he enlisted permanently in the army to start officer training. His parents were unimpressed as they hoped he would become a dentist. He served on the Russian border resolving disputes arising from missing livestock and crops by sitting around a table with his Russian counterparts, drinking potato vodka: whoever managed to remain seated would win the argument! Apparently, potato vodka is less likely to cause a headache than vodka made from grain.



He retrained in the Army Engineering Corps and, with the advent of war in 1939, was tasked with protecting and then destroying the Lupowski rail tunnel in the Carpathian Mountains which was a strategic link between Lwow and Budapest. After the fall of Poland, he received orders to reassemble in Paris, which took the company 12 weeks, much of it travelling on foot, via Hungary, Romania and Italy. It was whilst he was in Paris attending the Polish church one Sunday that he caught sight of Zosia (left), the younger sister of a girl he had known in Warsaw .... They kept in touch thereafter.

The French army crumbled quickly under German attack and the Polish army retreated to England, via Biarritz, to Liverpool. Whilst in Biarritz, my father was dismayed to see the French army 'celebrating' their defeat by the Germans, as it meant that they could return home. He was not impressed.

By then, Zosia was working at the Polish army staff headquarters in Paris. However, she left for England via Calais, where she retrained as a nurse.

My father remembered drawing his first pay from a bank in Chester while being in transit at a camp - in either Oulton Park or Marbury - prior to being despatched to Crawford, a village near Glasgow. They stayed there for nine months, living in tents on a windswept hillside and using the river Clyde to defrost frozen beef carcasses (which were date-stamped 1914!), on which they were fed, whilst training for future combat.

During the following winter life improved. He was billeted in Elgin, with a Scottish family. Evenings were spent at the local distillery, sampling whisky, whilst being trained during the day by the SOE for his chosen assignment of being dropped back into Poland to organise partisan resistance groups near to where he was brought up. As a final part of his training he was sent to the Parachute Training School at Manchester Ringway, using Tatton Park as a drop zone. Disaster struck ... on his last jump he got his legs entangled in the parachute on landing and injured his spine. Knowing that Zosia was nursing in the 2nd Polish Military Hospital in Dupplin Castle, near Perth, he asked

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to be transferred there - and was duly given a train pass. Zosia evidently looked after him very well as she later became my mother! At the hospital, the chief surgeon arranged for a mahogany door to be taken down, then the mouldings were filled with plaster of Paris and this was used as a cast on which my father spent eight weeks to reset his back.

In the event, my father's accident, whilst painful, proved fortunate, because the Polish officer who took his place, to be dropped into the location in Poland, was unfortunately met on arrival by a reception party of German soldiers. After his recovery, my father was posted to various military staff appointments in London and my mother retrained as a military radio operator so that she could join him.

During the final stages of the war my mother worked at a radio station in Stanmore, north London, just a few hundred yards from the house in which I was raised. My father was trained to demolish buildings, but after the war formed a building company ... specialising in repairing bomb damage in London.

After the war my parents (pictured) chose to remain in England and did not take up the Communist Polish government's 'gift' of a free trip back to Poland. Many of their colleagues did, however, and sadly they were taken on the 'Siberian Express' - with no return journey.

I grew up knowing nothing of my father's time spent in Cheshire during the war. It was only when we moved to Great Budworth that he began recalling his time spent here.

Wojtek Kordel



## A YOUNGSTER'S VE DAY (2)

**I** was three years old on VE Day. My father had died a few weeks before, a victim of the 'flu epidemic which was sweeping Europe. He was 35.

I remember the main shopping streets of Ilkley, the town where we lived; they were lined with oil drums filled with sand, the flags of the nations 'growing' out of them. I remember the flags seemed to reach to the sky - brightly billowing cloth on great white poles.

I remember being put to bed in the late afternoon that day for a rest, and then being got up in the darkening evening and put in my pram. Pushed by Uncle Arthur, a dear friend of my Father's, and accompanied by my Mother and brother, Mike, we went to the car park in the middle of the town. And there I remember a throng of people and noise and singing and fireworks. I recall feeling very small in the midst of something very big and good.

And I remember, a while after, the taste of my first banana.

Caroline McGuigan